

## **Testimony**

### **Senate Bill 2321**

#### **House Human Services Committee**

**Tuesday, March 1, 2005; 9 a.m.**

#### **North Dakota Department of Health**

Good morning, Chairman Price and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Kelly Carlson, and I am the local health liaison for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to provide information about Senate Bill 2321.

During the fall of 2003, the North Dakota Department of Health began the process of assessing public health performance across the state in an effort to ensure the delivery of essential public health services to the people of North Dakota. The department used assessment tools from the National Public Health Performance Standards Program, an initiative developed by national partners and led by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The purpose of the program is to provide measurable performance standards that center on the 10 Essential Public Health Services, focus on the overall public health system, describe an optimal level of performance and support a process of quality improvement. The assessment allows communities to identify their perceived public health needs and to engage in performance improvement strategies.

It was very important to include the tribal health systems as part of the statewide assessment because the health systems within the reservations tend to function as separate entities even though they are officially part of the local public health jurisdiction in the counties where they are located.

The Three Affiliated Tribes on the Fort Berthold Reservation completed the assessment as a pilot site. Key participants included representatives of Tribal Health, Indian Health and the Tribal Business Council, as well as program managers, Tribal elders and others. The assessment process identified “improve communication and coordination of services within the tribe and at the state and federal level” as the priority area to be addressed. A key action determined by assessment participants is the need for a Native American representative on the State Health Council.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.